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LWVCCA PRESIDENT’S GREETINGS

Happy New Year, Members:

It would be lovely if, in fact, the New Year is a happy one. Perhaps this will be the case in our personal lives. My deeper concern, however, is how things will play out in our larger world. In some respects, we are fortunate that we live in Massachusetts. While no one is completely satisfied with the political climate in their own state, we have made great strides towards making things more open and equitable for our citizens. Many of you have been active and helpful in making that happen. I wish to thank all of you for your continued efforts.

However, going forward, there seems to be a momentum for constricting personal and political freedoms in our Country. With the recent rulings by the Supreme Court, it is evident that battles fought in the past will once again come to the forefront of our focus. Add to that the onslaught of questionable people moving into positions that oversee the election process in a number of states and we stand to face a difficult election year ahead.

www.lwvCapecod.org

lwvcca@gmail.com

<http://www.facebook.com/LWVCCA/>

Without a doubt, there will be much to do. While we cannot address everything that we would like to, as League members, voting rights along with free and fair elections have always been a central issue in our work. Living in Massachusetts, it is easy to forget about the issues taking place in other states. Unfortunately, we are a part of a larger whole. Like the human body, if gangrene sets in, even in a big toe, the possibility of death is imminent unless the toe is treated. We cannot ignore the larger issues in our country just because it is not impacting us directly. I am hoping for targeted direction from LWVUS in the coming weeks and months for ways to address those national issues that can ultimately affect us all. Please look for things coming down the pike and be willing to do whatever you can to take action that can help turn the direction of the flood.

I am in the midst of reading a book entitled *Fears of a Setting Sun* (Dennis C. Rasmussen). It is a haunting look at the hopes and fears of five of the framers of the Constitution, Washington, Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson and Madison through their original writings. None of these men had high hopes for the endurance of the government they had just created. They all had many of their own reasons, but central to them all was the belief that democracy could not endure without moral people in government who were committed to the people rather than to their own gain. I never thought I would have to worry about the downfall of America, but then I suppose other people have thought that about their own countries as well. There is much at stake going forward and this New Year, 2022, could be a rocky one. Please stay focused on the local but open to working toward national change. There is much to lose if we turn a blind eye.

With hopes for the future,
 Suzanne
 (ed. note: *Fears of a Setting Sun*, Dennis C. Rasmussen: at [This link](#))

DID YOU KNOW—?

...that almost 6000 bills are filed with the MA House of Representatives and 2000 with the MA Senate each year? The clerk of each branch sorts and assigns each a number and refers each bill— based on its subject matter—to the proper committee?

...that Barnstable County had 183,614 registered voters as of February 2021, most of whom are unaffiliated with a political party?

CALENDAR

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY January 4 | 9:30 a.m.

Zoom conference by invitation

WHAT a DIFFERENCE a D.A. MAKES!



WEDNESDAY January 26th | 6 - 7:00 p.m.

Zoom Webinar: Registration Req'd

UPCOMING

BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY February 1 | 9:30 a.m.

Zoom conference by invitation

Common Start Bill Forum



SATURDAY February 5 | 10 a.m.

Zoom Webinar: Registration Req'd

Go to <https://tinyurl.com/LWVCCA-calendar> to see our entire Google calendar. Click on any calendar listing to see more detail.

DECEMBER 2 BOARD MEETING

Bylaw changes:

Suzanne asked the Board to review the Bylaws over the next few weeks and see if any changes should be made and send any thoughts about changes to Suzanne discussion at the February Board meeting.

State data collection form:

Florence Seldin and Suzanne Brock will meet with committee chairs on Thursday January 27th at 9:00 A.M. to discuss this work and to complete the form for the WADADAM Forum together as a practice review.

Jeanne Morrison did a short version of the PowerPoint DEI presentation to the Board and plans to present it to all committees to facilitate greater understanding of applying DEI to our work and goal setting for committees.

Membership update:

Membership stands at 99. (Mati Ligon) Mati reported she is working on the New Member Tea to welcome members who joined in the last year. The Board decided it would take place, via Zoom, on Tuesday February 15 at 7:00 P.M

Legislative Committee update:

The Parity on Board bill has been reported favorably out of committee to both the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees. The bill that had already been voted favorably out of committee at a prior time was the VOTES Act. Of the 17 bills we have been following, these two have moved forward.

Florence Seldin reviewed the Member Interest list and found 10 members interested in environmental issues; she will be meeting with seven of them on February 12.

DECEMBER 1 MEMBERS' HOLIDAY GATHERING

A Post-Holiday note of thanks

Dear Members,

I would like to thank all of you who joined us for our December Membership Meeting. Even though

it was once again via Zoom, those of you present were joyful and received our speaker, Deborah Swiss, terrifically. If you were unable to attend, you missed a great discussion of her book, *The Tin Ticket* that highlights the determination and courage of women — something we all know a bit about.

A second big thank you goes out from me to a handful of courageous women who were willing to meet together in person to relax, be creative and share in a holiday book exchange. It was so good to see a couple of you whom I had not yet had the pleasure to meet in person. It was great. Many thanks for putting up with my request — and “thank-you’s” to Maureen Grandmont for her creative coaching, and to Jeanne Morrison for the hospitality and her fabulous quiches! Here’s to more safe in-person gatherings.

With overflowing heart,
Suzanne

December 4 Informal Members’ Meeting

Some LWVCCA members met at the Clubhouse at Cobblestone Landing in Hyannis for coffee, pastries, and a book swap. From the comments below, it’s clear that many of us missed a very enjoyable event! It was a great success, and—pandemic permitting—we’ll try to schedule more in the new year.

“Hi all,
Thank you all for coming. It was a great time to gather, relax, be creative, share ideas and have some goodies. To Maureen Grandmont, an extra Happy Birthday, and a big thank you for being our creative coach. 🙌 You can catch a glimpse of two of our creations on the table in front of Jeanne and I with our books from the book exchange. Unfortunately, we were having such a good time that we forgot to take pictures until all had left and Jeanne and I were cleaning up. 😓 But we did take

these couple to prove that the event took place!



I would also like to thank Karen, Barbara and Rosemary for staying a bit to help with clean up. Definitely a team effort. For those of you who had signed up to come but in the end could not, you missed a good time! There will be others.

Take care all and once again thank you for indulging me for an in person event. Have a lovely, safe holiday.

*Peace,
Sue”*

“Thank you all. I'm so happy that we decided for this small group to gather. 2 hrs well spent with League members I've never met in person and those I've missed seeing in person. Great time! Thanks again Maureen for the holiday craft and everyone for bringing a book! Sue's help organizing and set up and the clean up crew 🙌❤️

Jeanne”

“Thank you for such a lovely gathering. Maureen you were wonderful! I stopped on the way home and bought a glue gun so I could add shells 🙌 I look forward to seeing you all again and am so happy to have met you IRL (in real life)

*All the best,
Mary”*

*"Nice pictures, even if most of us were gone by then.
:)*

Echoing Jeanne and Mary's comments. Let's do this kind of "intimate social" again sometime. It was great to get to know other members on a more "personal" level.

Elaine"

"Hello all...

I am so glad that you all had a great time. It was so nice. And I was so remiss in not thanking Jeanne for her terrific quiches. That was my big bad!!! Thanks Jeanne... they were superb.

See you all soon for a repeat!

Cheers,

Sue"

HEALTH COMMITTEE

The Common Start legislation, H.605/S.362 establishes a system of affordable, accessible, high quality early education and childcare with an incremental rollout over 5 years. It will prioritize the lowest income, highest need families (including foster parents) through direct-to-provider assistance, equitable pay for workers, and grants to support professional development. In support of this important legislation, the Cape Cod LWV's Health and Legislative Committees are holding an advocacy and education virtual Forum on Saturday, February 5, 2022. The Forum's Panel, consisting of representatives from families, child care and early education providers, workforce, legislators, and the Massachusetts government, will inform about the bill's importance and its funding importance.

PLEASE HOLD THE DATE OF FEBRUARY 5 ON YOUR CALENDARS.

Submitted by Eileen Elias
Chair, LWVCCA Health Committee

VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE

**Redistricting Finalized –
For the Next Ten Years**

During the summer, members of the LWVCCA Voter Service Committee attended every one of the Joint Committee on Redistricting's Zoom meetings held for all 9 of MA Congressional Districts. There were also meetings held in Portuguese, Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, among other languages. It was a very complete and transparent process. There were thousands of participants and many of them drew their own neighborhood district maps -- all of which the Joint Committee appreciated and took under consideration. Witnessing these meetings, Joint Chairs Senator William Brownsberger and Representative Michael Moran did an outstanding job.

On July 29, Suzanne Brock and Rosemary Shields testified during Congressional District 9's hearing. We asked the the Joint Committee to look at the town of Barnstable which was divided into 3 State Representative districts and asked if the community could be more consolidated into 2 State Representative districts. The Joint Committee heard us and Barnstable is now represented by 2 districts.

Another bonus to the process was when the Joint Committee released its initial maps, there was some pushback that the State Senate districts were drawn using voter registration numbers rather than Census numbers. When the Drawing Democracy Coalition questioned this tactic, the Joint Committee re-considered and presented new State Senate maps based on the Census numbers. The LWVMA and the coalition Drawing Democracy applauded the statehouse effort. When we look around the country at the gerrymandering that is taking place in other states, we should be proud of what our state legislators accomplished.

The Congressional District maps were also not without controversy. Though the city of Fall River will no longer be divided into two Congressional Districts, it will now be represented entirely in Congressional District 4, rather than Congressional District 9. The Drawing Democracy Coalition is extremely disappointed that Fall River and New Bedford in the Ninth Congressional District were not united in the same Southcoast community. This was a once-in-a-decade

opportunity to unify a community anchored by its two Gateway Cities, Fall River and New Bedford, that have shared economic interests and cultural identities. According to the Boston Globe (November 19) there were competing arguments seemingly ping-ponged between speakers over 5 1/2 hours, dominating a legislative hearing that was ostensibly designed to take feedback about all nine proposed districts. The question was should the two cities share a representative and potentially strengthen their shared political hand or whether they would be best served as the largest city in their own districts. "I don't know if it's 50-50, but it's pretty close," state Representative Michael J. Moran, a Brighton Democrat and the House chairman of the redistricting committee, said of those testifying for or against the South Coast proposal. The Congressional District map remained as drawn.

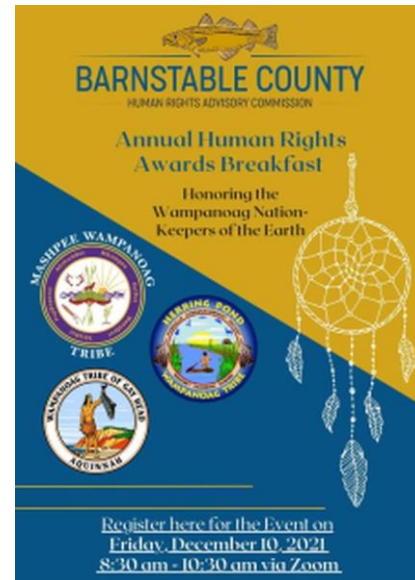
All three redistricting bills that redrew maps for the Massachusetts State House, Massachusetts State Senate and U.S. Congressional districts based on the 2020 census have been signed by Governor Baker. The Redistricting process was going to be complicated and arduous but on the whole, the state's Joint Committee on Redistricting did a superlative job, thoughtfully considering thousands of testimonies and being transparent in the process.

Submitted by Anita Rogers and Rosemary Shields,
Co-chairs, LWVCCA Voter Service Committee

DEI COMMITTEE

Human Rights Awards Breakfast

The Barnstable County Human Rights Advisory Commission (HRAC) held its Annual Human Rights Awards Breakfast on Friday, December 10. Jeanne Morrison was the moderator. The theme was "Honoring the Wampanoag Nation — Keepers of the Earth."



An article about the event was published in the Cape Cod Times. Excerpts from that article are below.

By uplifting the Wampanoag nation and tribal youth, Jeanne Morrison said this year's Human Rights Awards Breakfast will "honor the heritage, culture, wisdom and guidance of Native people."

"If anybody fights for human rights, it's indigenous people," said Morrison, a member of the Barnstable County Human Rights Advisory Commission. "From heritage and culture to our Constitution, to street names that run through Barnstable County — it's all due to the cultural and environmental legacy of Wampanoag people."

To her knowledge, Susan Quinones, Barnstable County Human Rights coordinator, said it's the first time the commission has honored the Wampanoag tribe in this way and said the recognition is "a long time coming."

"The Wampanoag nation are the keepers of the earth. We think it's time to recognize the tribe and focus on the culture and the environmental contributions of the Wampanoag tribe."

To read the article on the Cape Cod Times website, go to this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yhk3j7as>

To see a PDF of the article on the LWVCCA website, go to this link: <https://tinyurl.com/3pd3uebd>

What a Difference a DA Makes



The LWVCCA along with 5 other nonprofit nonpartisan community groups are bringing the ACLU's **What a Difference a DA Makes** (WADADAM) voter education program to Cape Cod on January 26th, 2022, 6-7:30 pm. This will be a free virtual event.

District attorneys are the most powerful people in the criminal justice system. They decide who gets charged with a crime – and determine how most criminal cases are resolved. This means these elected officials have tremendous impact on people's lives and our communities.

What a Difference a DA Makes is a first-of-its-kind public education campaign in Massachusetts. Powered by a network of partner organizations, this campaign seeks to highlight the key role that the Commonwealth's district attorneys play in determining the effectiveness and fairness of the criminal legal system – and to inform and educate Massachusetts residents so they are more aware and engaged in their local district attorney elections."

Why is this education forum important? A 2017 poll showed that Massachusetts voters have limited knowledge of the power and budgets of district attorneys, and few realize that DAs are accountable only to voters, with little in the way of

checks-and-balances in between elections. Key findings support that:

- More than eight-in-ten Massachusetts voters feel the criminal justice system is biased and ripe for reform.
- Half of registered voters believe individual district attorneys have only a minor or insignificant impact on the functioning of the criminal justice system.
- Almost four-in-ten (38%) did not know that district attorneys are elected and accountable only to voters.
- 88% of voters think Massachusetts should work to change the criminal justice system so that people are not treated differently based on who they know.
- 84% of voters think Massachusetts should work to change the criminal justice system so that people are not treated differently based on their race.
- Fewer than half (48%) of Massachusetts voters think the state's criminal justice system is working, with huge majorities of all races and across ideological perspectives believing that the criminal justice system works differently for different people.

Thus, the ACLU developed the WADADAM program, which seeks to build voter awareness of the life-changing power wielded by district attorneys, and how voters can hold district attorneys accountable and encourage them to make fair and just decisions. Implementation of the campaign shows that voters' attitudes about the criminal justice system were affected when informed about the major impact district attorneys have on the workings of the criminal justice system.

- Nearly eight-in-ten (79%) voters say a commitment to racial justice is an important quality for a candidate for district attorney — ranking that commitment higher than the 65 percent who list prior experience as a prosecutor as a key quality for DA candidates
- 81 percent of voters say they are more likely to pay attention to their local District Attorney race in 2018.

"This poll shows there is a clear opportunity to increase voter engagement in district attorney races," said Rahsaan Hall, director of the Racial Justice Program at the ACLU of Massachusetts.

Video link: [What a Difference a DA Makes](#)

Resources: [What a Difference a DA Makes - ACLU Massachusetts](#) and <https://www.aclum.org/en/what-difference-da-makes-0>

Link to the poll referenced in the article: <https://www.aclum.org/en/press-releases/poll-mass-voters-think-criminal-justice-system-biased>

General ACLUM link to criminal law reform info: <https://www.aclum.org/en/issues/criminal-law-reform>

Submitted by Jeanne Morrison, *LWVCCA Co-Vice-President for Program*, and advisor to the *LWVCCA DEI Committee*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

All bills have to be voted favorably out of their committees by Feb 2, 2022. Only one of the bills that we are following—the VOTES Act-- has been voted favorably out of its committee and is awaiting House action. All others still need to be voted on in several committees, so January will be a busy month. Except for the final bill summarized below—a late proposal—the LWVCCA has testified in support of all the following bills. We will send out updates throughout the month.

The VOTES Act—S.2545 (Re-printed as [S.2554](#))

This bill restores the popular voting reforms from 2020 including expanded mail-in voting, joining the interstate ERIC consortium, and Same Day Registration during the early voting period. The bill has been passed by the Senate and is ready for action by the House Ways and Means Committee and on the House floor.

Safe Communities Act—[H. 2418/S.1579](#)

An Act to Protect the Civil Rights and Safety of all Massachusetts Residents

The Safe Communities Act protects the civil rights of all state residents by making sure

immigrants are offered due process rights and that local resources are not used towards enforcing federal immigration law. The bill limits notifications to ICE unless someone were charged with a criminal offense. Any 287(g) agreements, which allow state and county personnel to act as federal immigration agents, would end. Senators Cyr and Moran support the bills along with Representatives Peake, Diggs, and Fernandes. The bill is in the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security.

Please contact the committee at JCPSHS@malegislature.gov.

Common Start Bill—[H.605/S.362](#)

The Common Start legislation would establish a system of affordable, high-quality early education and childcare for all Massachusetts families over a 5-year timeline and prioritizes the lowest-income, highest-need families. The bill proposes both direct-to-provider funding and financial assistance to families to reduce costs, while compensating providers for the true cost of providing quality care. Senators Moran and Cyr support this legislation, along with Representatives Diggs, Fernandes, and Peake. The LWVCCA is an active partner with the Common Start Coalition, Cape and Islands Chapter, in supporting this bill and co-sponsoring a virtual public forum about the bill on February 5 at 10 am. Check the League's website for registration information, coming soon.

Additional Legislation:

An Act to Protect Cape Cod's Environment and Water—[H.4022](#)

This bill has special significance for Cape Cod with the proposed Joint Base Cape Cod Multi-Purpose Gun Range. The sponsor of the bill is Representative Dylan Fernandes, Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket, along with the support of Senator Julian Cyr. Because the bill was introduced too late for the LWVMA to adopt it for advocacy, please feel free to advocate for the bill as an individual, without using the League's name. Written testimony may be submitted by email to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural

Resources, and Agriculture.

JointCommittee.Environment@malegislature.gov .

Submitted by Carole Young-Kleinfeld, Renate Sands, Elaine Dickinson

Co-Chairs, LWVCCA Legislative Committee

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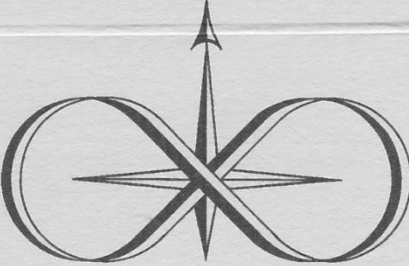
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Terry Moore

253 Huckins Neck Rd.
Centerville, MA 02632

508-771-0457
cell; 508-274-7667
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www.mooredvd.com

Yankee Ingenuity
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Jon Vaughan

A gallery with a different point of view